

Message Text

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44

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 IO-14 ACDA-19 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 OMB-01 CIEP-02 DRC-01 /137 W

----- 022396

P 051654Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5777

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMCONSUL BELFAST

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE DUBLIN 0874

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PBOR, EI, UK (NI)

SUBJECT: NEW BRITISH WHITE PAPER ON NI: DUBLIN REACTION

1. DUBLIN PAPERS MORNING OF JULY 5 CARRY TEXT OF NEW BRITISH WHITE PAPER ON NI. ON PREVIOUS EVENING, GOI SOCIAL CONTACT GAVE US FOLLOWING INITIAL REACTION, WHICH MAY BE SUBJECT TO SOME MODIFICATION AFTER FURTHER STUDY.

A. WHITE PAPER PROVIDES FOR ELECTION OF NI CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION, BUT DATE WILL PROBABLY BE LATE 1974 AT EARLIEST. EXCEPT FOR CHAIRMAN, CONVENTION WILL BE COMPOSED ENTIRELY OF ELECTED NI REPRESENTATIVES, GETTING AROUND CRITICISM THAT PREVIOUS ATTEMPT AT POLITICAL SOLUTION WAS IMPOSED BY LONDON. THIS IS BASICALLY WHAT GOI HAD FORE-SEE AND CONSIDERED BEST SCENARIO FOR NEW ELECTIONS (SEE DUBLIN 0800).

B. GOI ENTIRELY APPROVES OF WHITE PAPER'S INSISTENCE THAT ANY POLITICAL SOLUTION BE BASED ON POWER-SHARING BETWEEN PROTESTANT AND CATHOLIC COMMUNITIES. THIS HAS BEEN TAKEN FOR GRANTED, BUT IT IS MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN POLITICAL PROGRESS.

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C. IRISH DIMENSION IS EXPLICITLY MENTIONED, BUT GOI FEARS THAT EMPHASIS ON IT HAD BEEN REDUCED A LITTLE TOO FAR.

D. WHITE PAPER MAKES IMPLICIT THREATS TO CUT OFF BRITISH FINANCIAL SUPPORT IF PROTESTANT COMMUNITY REFUSES TO ALLOW SHARE OF REAL POWER TO CATHOLICS. GOI AGREES, ALTHOUGH SUCH THREATS MUST BE USED VERY CAUTIOUSLY. THIS WAS ALSO AN EXPECTED FEATURE OF WHITE PAPER.

2. DUBLIN PAPERS ALSO RECEIVE WHITE PAPER REASONABLY WELL, ALTHOUGH NOT WITH EXCITEMENT LIKE THAT AFTER EARLIER SUNNINGDALE AGREEMENT. (SOME PAPERS EVEN GIVE DAIL CONTRACEPTION DEBATE MORE PROMINENT COVERAGE.) GENERAL OPINION IS THAT NEW WHITE PAPER RETAINS MOST GOOD FEATURES OF SUNNINGDALE AGREEMENT, WITH SOME CONCESSIONS TO NI SECTOR WHICH HAS RECENTLY LOOKED MOST THREATENING --EXTREME PROTESTANTS. COMMENTATORS GENERALLY DETECT AN ELEMENT OF "GLOOM" AND "HAND-WRINGING" IN WHITE PAPER. MOST WRITERS CONCLUDE THAT THEY HAVE BEEN CORRECT IN ADDUMING THAT BRITISH INTEND EXTRICATE THEMSELVES FROM NI AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

3. COMMENT: WHITE PAPER SEEMS TO US VERY SENSIBLE DOCUMENT, CLEARLY ON ONLY SANE PATH TO NI POLITICAL SOLUTION. MOST OTHER ALTERNATIVES WOULD HAVE BEEN MUCH LESS DESIRABLE. LATEST WHITE PAPER IS CERTAINLY A LESS INSPIRING DOCUMENT THAN ITS PREDECESSORS, BUT THIS WAS INEVITABLE: THERE ARE NO MORE BRILLIANT NEW IDEAS TO BE TRIED. MAIN INGREDIENTS OF SUNNINGDALE SOLUTION ARE RETAINED. WITH LUCK, WHITE PAPER COULD ALLOW COOLING-OFF PERIOD OF AT LEAST SEVERAL MONTHS, BUYING TIME FOR THE SORT OF ATTITUDE CHANGE WHICH IS MOST ESSENTIAL NEED IN ANY NI SOLUTION.
MOORE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NORTHERN IRELAND, POLITICAL SITUATION, ELECTIONS, PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 JUL 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: shawdg
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974DUBLIN00874
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740179-0058
From: DUBLIN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740774/aaaackyj.tel
Line Count: 91
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: shawdg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 MAY 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 MAY 2002 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <20 FEB 2003 by shawdg>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NEW BRITISH WHITE PAPER ON NI: DUBLIN REACTION
TAGS: PINT, PBOR, EI, UK, (NI)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005